



Eric Funk, winner of the 2010 Artist's Innovation Award for Performing Arts

Artist Statement:

I am a contemporary classical composer with, currently, 113 major works in my catalog. Eight symphonies [and one, ninth symphony, in progress], four operas, five ballets, five string quartets, seventeen concertos, five large choral works, and numerous works for chamber ensembles comprise my oeuvre. Trained by Eastern European composers & mentors Tomas Svoboda [Czech], Krzysztof Penderecki [Pole], and Sandor Veress [Hungarian], I was positioned to carry on the legacy of composing serious music reflecting the evolution of classical music in western civilization. The honor of carrying that legacy forward as a composer, conductor, and teacher is formidable and one I take very seriously. Contemporary classical music is a sophisticated art form. In a world that all too often confuses art and entertainment, holding the edge of creating meaningful, substantive music in a world where music has been reduced to a commodity is a significant challenge. Outside a small community of deeply informed musicians, what I create is often not understood. But, like my forebears, I am fully aware of the fact that the music I compose today will most likely be appreciated 50 years from now; it is written for future ears. However, as a dedicated teacher, I am committed to inculcating audiences, young and old, with entries into the new classical music of today and tomorrow. Evidence of this behavior is preponderant in my career as an educator, certainly in my eight years as conductor of the Helena Symphony and Gallatin Chamber orchestras and, recently, in my sixth year as a lecturer for "WonderLust", [a continuing education outreach series offered through MSU at the Museum of the Rockies] This year I offered the course: Fifth Symphonies: From Beethoven and Mahler to Schnittke, Svoboda, and Funk. Creative artists need to take quantum leaps with every new work.

There is no real value or creative satisfaction in writing what we know or adding derivative works from our own processes to our catalogs. I am constantly undertaking projects that reach far beyond my ability, inspiring and informing an intentional growth, and revealing a varied, stylistically sweeping catalog. I will compose until the day I die. And my last works will be the most radical in my catalog.

Regarding your work and artwork, describe the innovations you have made in your art and/or your process.

Immediately, I just returned from Budapest, Hungary March 11, 2010] to work with violinist Vilmos Olah, for whom I recently composed a ground-breaking new concerto: "Vili: Concerto for the Violin Alone, Op 109". Once premiered, this new work will emerge as revolutionary in the violin repertoire. This 3-movement, 30 minute piece is scored on two staves: the top line is the solo part, the bottom line is the accompaniment; these are played simultaneously, the soloist accompanying himself in real time. In the late 1970s, my ballet "A Glimpse: Soliloquy in a Forest" was premiered by Portland Ballet Company. This kinetic dance piece involved a sophisticated shadow-activated volume control which, with the use of light beams, mirrors, and sensors, allowed the dancers to actually create the music to which they danced by moving through light beams.

A few years ago, commissioned by American Composers Forum to create a piece celebrating Montana youth, I composed the work "From the Dreams of Montana Children", In short, I wrote an open letter to all elementary school principals in Montana, asked them to ask the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders to draw or paint a picture of a dream they had while sleeping, write a sentence on the back describing that dream, and send it to me. I received over 1800 pieces of children's art from all over Montana. The sentences on that back became the text for the work, which was performed with a 150-voice children's chorus from Ennis, Belgrade, and Bozeman at Carnegie Hall accompanied by the New England Repertory Symphony Orchestra. My opera-ballet "Anna Akhmatova" involves one singing role: Anna Akhmatova. All other characters are portrayed by dancers. This work was premiered by the Helena Symphony and Montana Ballet with two principle dancers from the Kirov Ballet. I recently completed a work entitled "Valediction". This is a "concerto" for ANY artist and pre-recorded sound, the request from me being that the artists offer live performances driven by the prompt, "If you had twenty minutes to express to the world that which you wish to express, present that in real time, accompanied by the recording." My objective was to receive as many responses as possible from singers, instrumentalists, actors, dancers, painters, anyone who "has something to say".

Regarding your work and artwork, describe how the artwork samples you submitted illustrate the evolution of your work.

These recordings reveal a major evolution in my original orchestral music. Symphonies 3 & 5 & 9, two of the three submissions [Sym #3 and mvm 2 from Sym #5] have been professionally

recorded by the Czech Radio Philharmonic and Latvian National Symphony Orchestra. These samples reveal free standing symphonic works. My new project, a pentalogy, involves my orchestral compositions "The Sojourner's Eye" and Symphonies #6, #7, #8, and #9, acting together as one gigantic statement. In addition to the innovation, the evolution of the music itself is clearly audible. Some of the technology involved, with added theatrical elements, expands the construct of the traditional symphony toward something between a series of sound sculptures and a massive mixed media event. Using, for example, 20 audio speakers in surround sound in Symphony No 9, the constant sound of wind that, during soft orchestral passages or silences, reveals whispered fragments of the John Haek poem "The Dream Continues", is something that has never before been done. Also, I am in touch with the environmental science community, trying to engender excitement around the possibility of building a conference around a concert performance. The idea driving this is that scientists and, subsequently the public, tend to operate cognitively when it comes to issues like global warming. Having music as a trigger into the affective, imaginal parts of the brain promises to ignite passion, excite imaginations, and hopefully inspire more operant behaviors around pressing issues. I am currently preparing, in response to an invitation by Dr. Petrus Martens [solar physicist at Harvard University, currently researching at Montana State University], a lecture-concert of my new pentalogy at the forthcoming, prestigious international conference on Solar Physics, occurring in Bozeman, June 2010.

Regarding public access to your work and artwork, describe a low-cost or no-cost activity to take place during the grant period that will convey your innovative work and artistry to other Montanans.

I understand that the Bozeman June conference presentation of my pentalogy, "Beyond Time", will be open to the public. I am interested in offering repeat, free lecture-concerts anywhere in Montana, on request. I would plan to offer two of these presentations: one in Bozeman [i.e. at the Museum of the Rockies/Hagar Auditorium] and one in Helena, [perhaps at the Myrna Loy Theater]. This first evocative 'aural view' of the project should help build momentum and interest for actual performances of the music, admittedly a daunting undertaking. The entire work spans approximately 4 1/2 hours, requiring full symphony orchestra & mixed chorus. This is not without precedent since Wagner opera cycles require as much time and, from history, we know that Beethoven often programmed two symphonies and two piano concerti for the same concert.



Kristi Hager, winner of the 2010 Artist's Innovation Award for Performing Arts

Artist Statement:

Paint simple things for five years and you will learn to paint. The first fifteen years of my life as an artist were guided by these words from my painting mentor, Gordon Cook. I took the directive seriously and became a good painter. I received awards, taught at universities and exhibited nationally. These years of discipline were critical to learning the next big lesson: getting really good at one thing gives you confidence to do whatever needs to be done. I include these early guiding principles because they prepared me to take on the next challenge required of a mature artist who wants to do innovative work. If you don't take a chance of making a fool of yourself, you are wasting everybody's time. If I had continued painting my signature single object still lifes, I would have stayed safely inside the canon. People would recognize it as art, even applaud it, but nothing new would be learned. In 1996, at age fifty, I had risked making a fool of myself if I was going to bring something new into the world. Public speaking terrified me. Writing was a challenge. Working outside my comfort zone spawned the most potentially foolish thing I had ever done: the Cool Water Hula, a mash-up of a country-western song, a hula and a superfund site. Going out on a limb with that performance took me out of the studio and into grade schools, a high school, hospitals, rural libraries, a state literacy conference, public radio, You Tube, collaboration with a twelve foot puppet. The chance to make a fool of myself continues to be a precious opportunity to break new ground artistically and contribute to my community.

Regarding your work and artwork, describe the innovations you have made in your art and/or your process.

Art Action: When I found myself speaking through a bullhorn, instructing over one hundred and fifty people to do hula, I knew I had crossed some line as an artist. I was out of the studio and

mixing it up with people from all walks of life. I had created a performance designed to bring humor, beauty and goodwill to a massively damaged piece of earth, the Berkeley Pit. It didn't seem to fit into existing art genres so we invented a name for it: an Art Action. This Art Action gave people an outlet for publicly expressing reverence and concerns for a place by singing and dancing in unison on location. That so many people jumped at the chance to take part in something so patently outrageous and potentially foolish, and that they were uplifted by the experience tells me that the Art Action served a need largely unmet in the dominant culture. It was transformative for many of the participants. As poet Ripley Hugo said, "When we started to dance, fifty years of anger fled. It was like a first walk outside." Pulling off the Cool Water Hula required everything in my life to be relevant, my love of hula and country-western music, my story telling ability for recruiting dancers, my painting for creating a palette of blues and ochres at the performance site. I had to learn new skills working with insurance companies, Butte-Silver Bow government, mine owners, the press. For the Cool Water Hula 10th Anniversary I am making innovative use of cyberspace sites that did not exist ten years ago: Facebook, YouTube and blogs. In 2008, the Cool Water Hula was included in a new Montana history book for middle school students, eight years after the original event. This meant so much more to me than being in a glossy art magazine. I realized then that I had done more than make a beautiful performance. It was a different form of activism that had side-stepped confrontation, blame and polarizing anger and it had captured the imagination of the community at large. We had made history.

Spoken Word: Sitting down to write tends to shut down my creative energy. I have had to experiment and invent the best ways to get at what I want to say. I walk or drive for miles, talking into a digital voice recorder, a process which eventually leads to the heart of the story. Moving while talking helps me find surprising connections that weave the stories. While the stories stand alone, some, such as "Hula, Seriously" and "Making Waves", are used to gather participants for larger events. Others are designed for radio or live performance. Some end up in books. "Hula, Seriously", has ended up in all three.

Regarding your work and artwork, describe how the artwork samples you submitted illustrate the evolution of your work.

"Open Pit" is the painting that launched me into an unlikely bond with the Pit. The painting was a departure from my still lifes. It was a landscape of a place that was considered an eyesore and yet it was beautiful to me. The pit became my muse for the next fifteen years. Meditating on the Pit's beauty and contradictions led me to writing the poem "Not Water". Reciting the poem at the Snow Geese Memorial in 1996 was frightening and exhilarating. The poem is full of anger. I wanted to get past the anger and do something positive. I danced hula to the song "Cool Water" in my studio overlooking the Pit. The "aha" moment came that same year at the edge of the Caldera on the Big Island when I saw hula dancers paying homage to this huge hole in the earth that looked amazingly like the Pit. I had a vision of masses of dancers on the rim of the Pit.

When I heard the Montana Women's Chorus and knew they were the sound I wanted for the Pit hula performance. Their director, singer-songwriter Judy Fjell, said "yes" and that was the encouragement I needed. I was off and running. Two more years of rehearsing and organizing led to the bullhorn moment addressing a crowd assembled at the edge of the Pit. I was doing something I had never fully imagined. My vision had materialized. The documentary video, Cool Water Hula: An Art Action, tells the story and explains how and why the song, the dance, and the Superfund site came together. I raised money, produced and directed the video, which was almost a bigger undertaking than actual event. The 10th Anniversary is inspired by the fact the Cool Water Hula was now in a history book. I saw the need to give the next generation a chance to experience it first hand. I looked for new ways to reconnect the hula diaspora and recruit new dancers. The hula instruction video is posted on YouTube, Facebook and coolwaterhula.blogspot.com. I made it fun and even funnier when I found the blue gloves at the last minute before videoing myself doing the dance. I feel it is important to include a new element into the 10th Anniversary event. The twelve-foot puppet, named Synnovei, creates a scaled up spectacle in keeping with the expected crowds at the National Folk Festival happening the same day. She is a quick learner. "Toothless" is an example of the kind of short, spoken word pieces that stands alone. I include it because it is set in Butte. "Laughing Fit" is part of a tribute to my mother. It is story I have included in "Hula, Seriously" and it is a story I love to tell. It helps explain why I do hula and how unlikely the chances.

Regarding public access to your work and artwork, describe a low-cost or no-cost activity to take place during the grant period that will convey your innovative work and artistry to other Montanans.

The 10th Anniversary of the Cool Water Hula is happening on July 10, 2010, in Butte Montana. It is free and open to the public. The National Folk Festival will be held that same weekend in Butte and the Cool Water Hula is included in the program. This provides an opportunity to attract a large audience from all over Montana. I plan to accommodate people who show up at the last minute and wish to participate in the performance.



Katherine Kramer, winner of the 2010 Artist's Innovation Award for Performing Arts

Artist Statement:

I am a dancer whose aesthetic is rooted in the traditions and artistry of classic American jazz, in all of its forms, both dance and music. It is influenced by the social, economic and cultural history of North America. This aesthetic is one that shapes my teaching, performance, choreography, collaboration, and my life. I consider myself a jazz artist – whether in tap shoes, barefoot, speaking, singing, cooking or planting. All of these roles are a means by which I aspire to build understanding and connections with a diverse audience on an honest, vulnerable and human level. From this sensibility I place community in a central spot, which in turn supports the creative voice of the individual. "Community" might be a group of dancers and musicians, performers and audience, students in a classroom. It might be global or local. Always, there is a commitment to forms and structures, which provide creative freedom, encourage vulnerability, and give support to the individuals making up the whole. Improvisation and play become both tools for creating form, as well as vehicles for spontaneous expression.

My creation process is fueled by these ideas and I strive to foster authenticity in all of my endeavors, believing that it is this honesty that allows participants or audience to enter a piece or place, experiencing it from their own perspective. I work very intuitively, listening to what presents itself easily and clearly. Then, by discovering and exploring relationships with other elements, mystery and meaning are revealed. I value relationship and work to creatively expand the possibilities of experiencing it artistically and with conscious intimacy. I am compelled to do what I do out of a thirst for this connection and the joyful experience of play, believing that both have a powerful and positive impact not only on me, but on our world. At this time in my creative life, I am expanding my personal relationship with music, specifically composing,

singing and playing melodica. I am working toward being able to tap while playing melodica and/or singing. As a choreographer, I am continuing to explore the many possibilities of interaction between dancers and musicians. As a producer, I am developing CrazyView Studio and Artist Retreat, as a means of enriching both my local community and the international community of artists who will make their way here to retreat.

Regarding your work and artwork, describe the innovations you have made in your art and/or your process.

I began my career as a modern dancer, then was drawn to jazz music and tap by what manifested in my eyes and ears as playful spirit, depth of experience, camaraderie, a way to be a dancer and musician, and fascination with the power of rhythm. Over the years, this served as inspiration for my innovations and the shaping of my artistic voice. As a Performer, I experiment with the possibilities of sound and rhythm in tap, developing ways of using both the shoes and a variety of surfaces to elicit texture and nuance in tone. I have been able to present tap as an instrument of rhythm, and as a melodic instrument. I use tap as a language, and with language, writing stories and poems which I perform while tapping. In this way, I integrate the literal and non-literal languages. I explore playing instruments and using props while tapping, and at times the props become instruments. Spending time in Brazil and Cuba, has allowed me to incorporate a variety of traditions and rhythms of these cultures into my dancing and choreography as well. As a Choreographer, I have drawn from the compositional elements in jazz music and applied them to choreographic structures, expanding them to include musicians moving with dancers and dancers "physicalizing" the music. With my knowledge of both modern dance and social dance forms, I experiment with a variety of methods of integrating them with tap dance. I have created choreographies that draw "non-dancers" into a performance setting, with comfort and ease. In collaboration, seven times, with marionette artist, Pablo Cano, I have applied my knowledge to the manipulation of puppets with particular sensitivity to rhythmic nuance and physical grounding and awareness. As an Educator, I have been able to synthesize my broad training in ways which develop a very refined level of tap technique. Teaching tap, I address technique in 3 ways: physical, musical and improvisational. This trains dancers to play a percussion instrument with their feet and be able to work alongside any musician with skill and understanding. They develop a very full-bodied, physical approach to tapping. I have developed teaching methods that refer specifically to the essence of jazz that originally drew me in: a playful spirit, a depth of experience, camaraderie, a way to be a dancer and musician, a fascination with the power and complexity of rhythm. As a Producer, I have developed structures which serve to create an atmosphere of trust, support and openness for all event participants; students, faculty or audience members. In producing ten "Rhythm Explosion" dance and music festivals in Bozeman, I have experimented with shaping the event to allow all variety of dancers and musicians to share time together exploring and learning together with an eye toward compositional and choreographic invention. I have consistently posed the

question: How can we experience what is global, in an intimate way? To that end I have invited international performers to share their work and culture in this setting.

Regarding your work and artwork, describe how the artwork samples you submitted illustrate the evolution of your work.

The following samples illustrate my journey over the past 4 years in synthesizing the most important aspects of my aesthetic into a singular work.

1. This an excellent example of my work exploring listening and improvisation, dance and music, mixed cultures, and musician moving alongside dancer.
2. In this sample I have taken these ideas and added the element of a contemporary dancer, as well as 2 additional musicians. I have begun to shape specific choreography along with structured improvisation and I have brought the musicians more fully into spatial choreography with the dancers. This was performed as a work -in-progress and was ultimately included and developed as a part of an evening-length work, "Stop Look Listen."
3. This excerpt from the full-evening work, "Stop Look Listen" is an example of the clarity of sound and fullbodied approach in tap that has evolved out of my attention to tap as a musical instrument. The focus on listening, movement with musician, and addition of a new instrument, melodica, were employed.
4. In another excerpt, contemporary dancer and tap dancer both are responding improvisationally to poetry, followed by set choreography as a response to the poem, that uses musicians and dancers moving.
5. In this sampler of "Stop Look Listen" we see how the piece evolved into a whole, incorporating all of the above elements, as well as props, in a further synthesis of musical styles, musicians moving with dancers, conscious listening and playful spirited relationship.
6. Inspired by "Stop Look Listen," filmmaker, Susannah Newman, brought about an entirely fresh opportunity for collaboration by inviting me to work with her in creating a film. Elements of "Stop Look Listen" were re-structured and filmed in an outdoor setting. The result of this effort was the 16 min. screen dance, "A Shout at the Dawn." This excerpt demonstrates an adaptation to our environment, by having the dancer tapping on a tree stump and musician drumming with a basket.
7. This excerpt is the ending of the film and demonstrates a bit of what is possible when an entirely different medium becomes a part of the collaboration, creating an entirely new work of art.
8. This sample is provided in order to demonstrate how the resources afforded me by many years working improvisationally and in collaboration, can make it possible to (with only a few minutes to rehearsal) enjoy a playful cross-cultural exchange through the language of music and dance. Having received a Fulbright Grant in 2009, I was teaching in Prague and collaborating with a number of wonderful and varied musicians.

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I have recently opened CrazyView Studio and Artist Retreat in a rural community 30 miles outside of Bozeman. As a way of introducing my work and the activities planned for the new facility, I will offer a free lecture/demonstration and workshop to community members. They see video excerpts of my work as well as live performance. As well, they will be invited to participate in an improvisational structure designed to make them comfortable and open to moving with one another. This will take place in August of 2010.

